

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery having a housing comprising at least two cells that can be filled with an electrolyte, the rechargeable battery comprising:
  - a cover having openings provided therein;
  - a degassing system having openings provided therein, the cover and the degassing system arranged such that the openings provided in the cover and the degassing system are located above the cells of the rechargeable battery; and
  - a sealing plug provided in each of the openings, the sealing plug having an upper part and a lower part having a splash basket;wherein the upper part covers the openings on the outside of the cover and the lower part extends in the direction of the cells;
  - wherein the splash basket surrounds a cavity and has a plurality of plates defining slots distributed over its circumference, the splash basket having an inner diameter that increases from a free end of the splash basket to an upper end of the splash basket, each of the slots continuing as far as the free end of the splash basket; wherein each of the slots has a width that broadens with increasing distance from the free end of the splash basket, and wherein each of the plurality of plates includes a free end extending toward the free end of the splash basket; and
  - wherein the sealing plug has an opening provided therein separate from the slots and adjacent to the openings of the degassing system and the degassing system is connected to the splash basket via the opening in the sealing plug such that the slots form return paths for electrolyte from the degassing system.
2. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1 wherein the sealing plug is integral.
3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery having a housing comprising at least two cells that can be filled with an electrolyte, the rechargeable battery comprising:

a cover having openings provided therein;

a degassing system having openings provided therein, the cover and the degassing system arranged such that the openings provided in the cover and the degassing system are located above the cells of the rechargeable battery; and

a sealing plug provided in each of the openings, the sealing plug having an upper part and a lower part having a splash basket;

wherein the upper part covers the openings on the outside of the cover and the lower part extends in the direction of the cells; and

wherein the splash basket surrounds a cavity and has a plurality of plates defining slots distributed over its circumference, the slots continuing as far as a free end of the splash basket, wherein the slots and the interior diameter of the splash basket narrow from an upper end of the splash basket to the free end of the splash basket, and wherein each of the plurality of plates includes a free end extending toward the free end of the splash basket;

further comprising at least one of a state of charge indicator and an acid level indicator attached to the upper part of the sealing plug and passing through the lower part of the sealing plug and the cavity.

5. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 4 wherein the splash basket has a roughened surface.

6. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 4 wherein an acid level indicator is attached to the upper part of the sealing plug and the acid level indicator has a roughened surface.

7. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 4 wherein a state of charge indicator is attached to the upper part of the sealing plug and the state of charge indicator has a roughened surface.

8. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery having a housing comprising at least two cells that can be filled with an electrolyte, the rechargeable battery comprising:

a cover having openings provided therein;

a degassing system having openings provided therein, the cover and the degassing system arranged such that the openings provided in the cover and the degassing system are located above the cells of the rechargeable battery; and

a sealing plug provided in each of the openings, the sealing plug having an upper part and a lower part having a splash basket;

wherein the upper part covers the openings on the outside of the cover and the lower part extends in the direction of the cells;

wherein the splash basket surrounds a cavity and has a plurality of plates defining slots distributed over its circumference, the slots continuing as far as a free end of the splash basket and having a width that broadens with increasing distance from the free end of the splash basket, wherein the portions of the splash basket adjacent the slots are inclined such that the diameter of the free end of the splash basket is smaller than the diameter of an upper end of the splash basket, and wherein each of the plurality of plates includes a free end extending toward the free end of the splash basket; and

wherein the sealing plug is formed from an electrically conductive plastic.

9. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 8 wherein the free end of the splash basket contacts electrolyte provided in the cells.

10. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 1 wherein the sealing plug has a seal which is fitted to the upper part of the sealing plug for sealing the cover on the outside.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A sealing plug for sealing openings which are incorporated above cells in a rechargeable battery, the sealing plug comprising:

an upper part; and

a lower part which ends in a splash basket, the splash basket having a plurality of plates defining slots provided along its circumference;

wherein the slots continue as far as a free end of the splash basket and narrow from an upper end of the splash basket to the free end of the splash basket, the splash basket having an inner diameter that increases with increasing distance from the free end of the splash basket, and wherein each of the plurality of plates includes a free end extending toward the free end of the splash basket;

further comprising a state of charge indicator and electrolyte level indicator provided in the upper part and passing through the splash basket, the state of charge indicator and electrolyte level indicator projecting at the free end.